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How Big Pharma Makes a Killing From Letting People Die + More

The Defender's Big Pharma Watch delivers the latest headlines related to pharmaceutical companies and their products, including vaccines, drugs, and medical devices and treatments. The views expressed in the below excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender. Our goal is to provide readers with breaking news that affects human health and the environment.

By The Defender Staff

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How Big Pharma Makes a Killing From Letting People Die

Current Affairs reported:

> Nick Dearden's Pharmanomics is an essential primer on how the pharmaceutical industry works, taking a tour across the globe to explain clearly why Big Pharma's profits come at the expense of public health.
>
> Dearden, an investigative journalist and director of Global Justice Now, destroys the argument that high drug prices are necessary in order to maintain innovation. He shows how the pharmaceutical industry has pushed drugs that don't work, buried harmful side effects, experimented on the Global South, and extorted the public to line its pockets.
>
> He explains why scientific research needs to be under public, rather than private control, and offers a vision for a healthcare system that actually takes care of people's health. Dearden shows how the infamous Martin Shkreli, who became notorious for hiking drug prices, was not a mere bad apple, but following standard operating procedure in the world of "pharmanomics."

Bayer Says Judge Gave Roundup Jury Secret Message Before $175 Million Verdict

Reuters reported:

> Bayer (BAYGn.DE) is seeking to overturn a recent $175 million verdict in favor of a man who alleged that the company's Roundup weed killer caused his cancer, saying that the trial judge gave the jury a secret instruction that may have swayed their verdict.

The Oct. 27 verdict, for retired restaurant owner Ernest Caranci, included $25 million in compensatory damages and $150 million in punitive damages. The Philadelphia state court jury was divided 10-2, the minimum majority needed under state law for a verdict in a civil case.

In a motion on Monday seeking a new trial, Bayer said it learned from a juror after the verdict that the jury had previously been divided 9-3 and had sent a note to the judge asking how to proceed.

Bayer said that, according to the juror, one juror who had supported Bayer, and others who were wavering, quickly threw their support behind Caranci, and that jurors openly voiced frustration at the prospect of longer deliberations.

Roundup-related lawsuits have dogged Bayer since it acquired the brand as part of its $63 billion purchase of agrochemical giant Monsanto in 2018. In 2020, it settled most of the then-pending Roundup cases for up to $10.9 billion but still faces more than 40,000 lawsuits.

Shock Claim Oxford AstraZeneca's COVID Vaccine Was 'Defective' as Legal Case Launched

Express reported:

The efficiency of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine has been questioned by claimants lodging a suit with the High Court who have branded it "defective" in newly released documents.

A test case has been brought to the court by Jamie Scott, a father of two who claims to have suffered a brain injury resulting from a clot after he received the jab in 2021. In court documents, the father states the injury has left him unable to work, and he alleges the jab's efficacy was "vastly overstated."

He is joined by the widower and two young children of Alpa Tailor, who have lodged a second claim after the mum died aged 35 from blood clots following a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Together, the cases could pave the way for up to £80 million of payouts from 80 different claims of vaccine-induced Immune Thrombocytopenia and Thrombosis (VITT).

Mrs. Scott said: "We were told by the Government the vaccine was safe and effective but what's happened to Jamie has been life-changing and their [AstraZeneca] vaccine caused that."

DC Council Urges Mayor Muriel Bowser to Declare Emergency on Opioids

The Washington Post reported:

> The DC Council passed a measure Tuesday urging Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) to declare a public health emergency over the escalating opioid crisis, which is on pace to kill more than 400 DC residents for the fourth year in a row.
>
> The resolution comes at a time when advocates are pushing for the DC government to combat substance use disorder with the same vigor officials have shown in addressing the crime wave, which is the subject of new legislation.
>
> Virginia and Maryland have had public health emergencies over opioids in place for years, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared the crisis a national public health emergency in 2017 — contributing to the pressure from advocates who say that same urgency is long overdue in DC.
>
> The situation in the city has grown more acute in recent years: Between 2018 and 2022, fatal opioid overdoses more than doubled to 461, with nearly all overdoses involving the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl.
>
> The resolution was among a number of actions the council took Tuesday, including confirming Police Chief Pamela A. Smith, rejecting a request from the mayor to reprogram millions in rental assistance funds, and formally repealing the requirement that students in DC Public Schools be vaccinated against the coronavirus.

All Healthcare Professionals Have a Role to Play in Combating the Opioid Epidemic

Newsweek reported:

> The opioid epidemic is perhaps the most enduring and damaging public health crisis in American history and one that has been perpetuated by systemic barriers, indifference, and a lack of awareness and education among the public.
>
> Drug overdoses are a leading cause of injury-related death in the United States and most involve opioids. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 80,411 Americans died from an opioid overdose in 2021. That’s more than 220 lives lost every day.
>
> The fact is that treatment for opioid addiction is possible anywhere and by any healthcare professional. Treatment — often through medication-assisted treatment (MAT), which may be offered either in-person in a clinic or virtually through telehealth — saves lives and supports recovery from opioid use disorder. However, only about 1 in 4 people with opioid use disorder receive treatment.

Opioid addiction and overdose deaths do not discriminate by race, gender, or social class. It affects all of us, and everyone — especially physicians, psychologists, drug counselors, and other healthcare professionals — has a role to play in stopping this epidemic.

FDA Investigating Reports of Hospitalizations After Fake Ozempic

CBS News reported:

At least three Americans have been reported hospitalized after using suspected counterfeits of semaglutide drugs, which include Novo Nordisk's diabetes medication Ozempic, according to records released by the Food and Drug Administration.

Ozempic and Wegovy, another semaglutide medication from Novo Nordisk, have been in short supply for months amid booming sales for their use in weight loss.

The hospitalizations are among 42 reports to the FDA's Adverse Event Reporting System that mention the use of counterfeit semaglutide from around the world. The agency last updated its database at the end of last month to include reports tallied through the end of September.

Of the reports, 28 are classified as "serious" with outcomes that also include deaths.

New NIH Director Faces Battles Over Virus and Drug Research

Axios reported:

Newly confirmed National Institutes of Health director Monica Bertagnolli is taking the helm of the biomedical research agency at a critical moment, with budgets tightening and lingering questions about its stewardship of high-risk virus research and role in keeping drugs affordable.

Driving the news: The cancer doctor was confirmed by the Senate on Tuesday in a 62-36 vote, giving NIH its first full-time political leader in nearly two years.

Congressional Republicans are in a belt-tightening mood and the agency's work is being wrapped up in heated debates over COVID-19, drug pricing and U.S.-funded research in China.

What they're saying: "It's critical that she changes NIH's culture and establishes norms of transparency and honesty with the American people — a critical step to rebuilding trust in our government," said House Energy and Commerce Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.).

As AbbVie Continues Dominance, Total Spend on Leading Drug Ads in October Jumps to $221 Million

Fierce Pharma reported:

> In October's top 10 drug ad spending list, AbbVie once again leads the charts with its immunology drug, Skyrizi, as overall spending on the top 10 drug ads jumped to a near-record high for the year.
>
> According to the latest data from real-time TV ad tracker iSpot.TV for October, Skyrizi once again claimed the top spot, with spending skyrocketing from just over $30 million in September to $45.6 million last month.
>
> In second place, just as it also was in September, is Sanofi and Regeneron's franchise-in-a-drug Dupixent, which too saw spend on the drug's ads edge up from $29.7 million in September to just shy of $34 million in October.
>
> In third place and, once again, just as it was in September, is AbbVie's second big-selling immunology drug Rinvoq, and AbbVie is clearly feeling flushed with cash as it upped spending on commercials for Rinvoq by $6.8 million month over month.
>
> The total spending on the top pharmaceutical drug ads in October was a mighty $221.8 million, one of the highest monthly totals of the year and dwarfing the $164.8 million spent in September.

FDA's Woodcock, Other Experts Highlight Persistent Issues Plaguing Pharma, Biotech in the Wake of COVID

STAT News reported:

> Current and former government officials proffered a clear-eyed, and often depressing, take Tuesday on the state of clinical trials, the pharmaceutical industry, and biotech investors coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.
>
> The officials, including the Food and Drug Administration's second-in-command Janet Woodcock, acknowledged the drug industry's persistent lack of interest in collaborating on clinical trials, the ways hyper-competition pervades academic research and slows progress, and biotech investors taking the wrong lessons from the pandemic.
>
> The tenor Tuesday was a far cry from the optimism often shared during the heat of the pandemic, which saw vaccines and therapeutics developed at record rates thanks in large part to massive collaboration and investment between government and industry.

FTC Challenges Patents Held by Nine Big Drugmakers, Citing Unfair Competition

BioPharma Dive reported:

> The Federal Trade Commission is challenging patents for 17 drugs marketed by AbbVie, AstraZeneca, GSK and other pharmaceutical companies, claiming Tuesday that the intellectual property was "improperly or inaccurately listed" in a regulatory database.
>
> The notice letters are largely about products with specialized injectors or inhalers, such as Viatris' anaphylaxis shot EpiPen and GSK's asthma drug Advair, which rely on those devices to deliver a precise dose. The FTC said it has filed a dispute with the Food and Drug Administration seeking to have the patents removed from the database, called the Orange Book.
>
> The FTC's action comes two months after it approved a policy statement saying the agency would "use its full legal authority" to invalidate improperly listed patents. Drugmakers are increasingly under scrutiny for creating so-called "patent thickets" that make it difficult for generic challengers to enter the market.

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The Defender Staff
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Barry Burton

8 days ago

What used to be Health and Welfare has now become "WEALTH AND HELLFARE"!

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N

NoName4U

8 days ago

While this PARTICULAR cause of Global Justice Now is a worthy cause, this group pushes the whole 'green' BS along with the false flag of climate change. I would NOT blindly support an organization that supports mostly liberal causes. Check out their website with a critical eye.

2 0 Reply • Share ›

Clare Goldsberry

7 days ago

Most of these drug manufacturers spend far more on advertising than they do on innovation and product development. Count the number of drug ads on TV (if you're still watching TV and not streaming without ads) and you will be amazed!

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